

2nd Battalion, 25th Marines Newsletter

AUGUST 2008



2/25 Battalion Comand

605 Stewart Avenue
Garden City, NY 11530
(516) 228-5671

Commanding Officer:
LtCol Geoffrey Rollins

Sergeant Major:
SgtMaj Anthony S. Allen

Family Readiness Officer:
SgtMaj Joseph Gaines

Key Volunteer Advisor:
Andrea Rollins
andrearollins@comcast.com

Key Volunteer Coordinator:
Kathy Dupont
surfseal@hotmail.com

Echo Company KVC:
Rachel Clark
Echokvc@hotmail.com
Duty NCO number:
(717) 421 - 6169

Fox Company KVC:
Judythe Burkinshaw
ograddaigh@hotmail.com
Duty NCO number:
(518) 210 - 6729

Golf Company KVC :
Eileen Grosnick
Ewg242@aol.com
Duty NCO number :
(973) 865 - 4696

H & S KVC :
Cheryl Rhie
ctrhriel@aol.com

Weapons KVC :
Michelle Johnstone
Johnstone2mm@optline.com

BATTALION COMMANDING OFFICER COMMENTS

Families and Friends of 2/25,

As the summer begins to wind down we find ourselves in the middle of the Marine Corps' premier training venue; Exercise Mojave Viper. This month long exercise is testing our abilities to combine supporting arms with maneuver on a highly kinetic battlefield coupled with the urban warfare skills necessary to succeed in today's counter-insurgency fight.

The Marines and Sailors are exceeding everybody's expectations and are making myself and the Sergeant Major extremely proud. Kudos to Captain Martino and his platoon from Fox Company as they flawlessly executed Range 410A, the most difficult platoon size range in the United States. Additionally, kudos to Major Clark and the Marines and Sailors of Echo Company for outstanding execution of Range 400, again, a premier live-fire range differing from 410A only in the size of the maneuver element.

My apologies to all of you if you have had limited contact over the past couple of weeks with your Marine or Sailor. As previously stated we are living in Spartan conditions out at Camp Wilson with very limited access to phones and e-mail. Everyone is doing well; hot, but doing well.

We finish Mojave Viper on 28 August and we are still scheduled to deploy to the Iraqi Theater of Operations on or about 4 September. We are NOT going to any other country other than Iraq. We are NOT being de-mobilized. In addition, we are NOT taking anymore leave prior to our deployment. We will have about 6 days to complete our move from Camp Wilson to Mainside, pack our gear, and get ready for our flight schedules.

We are also deploying our advanced party on or about 21 August. These 80 Marines/Sailors are deploying early in order to conduct all of the coordination required for establishing living spaces, gear sets, and mission details from units already in Iraq. These troops will also be on the advanced party for our return to the United States in the spring of 2009 so everybody will be deployed for the same number of days.

It has been brought to my attention that some of the families are planning on visiting their Marine/Sailor prior to our September departure. I do not have any issues with this but would like to caution you all on a few things.

1.) If your Marine/Sailor is on the advanced party they will depart on 21 August.

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2.) You will not have any access to your Marine/Sailor prior to 29 August.

3.) From 29 August until our departure date we will be working long hours, the command will not be providing the troops with any special liberty or leave.

4.) The 4 September departure date could very easily be shifted to the left or to the right depending on the situation on the ground in Iraq.

In conclusion, your Marines and Sailors have been working hard all summer. Their skill sets are incredible, they have learned a lot and at this juncture I know I can look everyone of you in the eye and tell you that they are highly trained and ready for this deployment.

Thank you for all of your support, we could not be doing this without you!

Semper Fidelis,

LtCol Geoff Rollins
Commanding Officer

Battalion KVC/KVA Comments

Dear Family and Friends of 2/25,

We hope that those of you who were able to see your Marine or Sailor during block leave enjoyed your precious time with them. Even though the block leave was short, we're sure that you'll all agree that even one more minute with them was worth the pain of having to say good-bye again. Hopefully the time will pass quickly for us all.

We'd like to remind everyone that unless you receive an "official message", any information that you may hear should be treated as a rumor. Your Key Volunteer will pass any and all official messages to you as soon as possible.

You are able to continue to send mail to your Marine/Sailor in California until August 20, 2008. The last day they will pick up mail in 29 Palms is August 28, 2008. During the last week and a half in August, you may want to start collecting goodies to mail to your loved one once they have arrived in Iraq. We can assure you it will be a welcomed treat.

The good news is that once they have arrived in Iraq, we can start the countdown for their homecoming. Remember that we are all in this together. If you need anything, please remember to contact your Key Volunteer, as they are your most valuable resource.

Sincerely,

Kathy DuPont
2/25 Key Volunteer Coordinator

Andrea Rollins
2/25 Key Volunteer Advisor

JUST FOR LAUGHS

The first stop on my vacation was my sister's house in Montana. She's extremely organized -- before she leaves on a trip she always types up address labels for her postcards. This time, I figured I did her one better. The second day of our visit, I boasted, "You'll be impressed. I've already written thank-you notes to everyone I'll be staying with. They're all stamped and ready to go."

My sister was silent for a moment. Then she asked, "You mean those little envelopes I saw in your room and mailed this morning?" Mary Byrd, Fallon, NV – Readers Digest

Battalion Chaplain's Comments

TEST OF SERVICE

These three words -- test of service -- are to determine the degrees of dedication. To attain our degrees of dedication set forth in the Marine Corps, it will require strength, sacrifice, and goodwill, the highest degree of all. Considering our "present world conflict, it will be necessary for us to attain that degree if we are to win the peace as well as the war" (Samuel Oliver).

The founding fathers and recent heroes met this test in the fires of sacrifice, concentration camps, hunger, prison, sickness, and death. They proved that they could take it, as many individuals, families, and nations are doing today. And, as these Marines and Sailors pass through the fires, it is helpful to know that others have endured and are with us.

Many go far, but no farther. Your Marines and Sailors, however, have already gone and are willing to go to the second, the third, the fourth degrees of dedication. In spite of the pain and separation, as Marines, Sailors and loved ones, you seem to maintain the spirit of sacrifice, the spirit of service to the country and humanity. And you do this regardless of the cost.

Only those who attain this degree of dedication successfully pass the test of service. They even go far enough to share in the sacrifice of our founding fathers. They even go far enough to share in Christ's redemptive powers for humankind.

As loved ones, how would you answer the question Jesus put to his disciples just before he left them: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" Your reply will be, "Yes, we are able." For God is with us all. Keep on praying. And keep on keeping on.

LCDR Kobena K. Arthur, USNR
Battalion Chaplain

Resources

2/25 Battalion Website

<http://www.mfr.usmc.mil/4thmardiv/25thMar/2dBn/>

The official 2/25 Battalion website provides information on a variety of topics to include each Company's link on the left side of the site.

2/25 Battalion Toll Free Info Hotline

1-866-580-4699

See additional links below such as the Marine Corps Community Service, American Red Cross and Military One Source. You can find useful information such as communicating emergency messages to your Marines and Sailors, coping with deployment, legal matters and your kids education to name a few.

1. <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/>

2. www.militaryonesource.com

3. www.redcross.org

Echo Company Newsletter

2nd Battalion 25th Marines

AUGUST 2008



Echo Co. Headquarters
2991 N. 2nd St.
Harrisburg, PA
(717) 255-8080

Commanding Officer:
Major Charles Clark III
echo25@yahoo.com

Executive Officer:
Capt Erik Morton
erik.morton@usmc.mil

Company First Sergeant:
1st Sgt Everett Ready
everette.ready@usmc.mil

Family Readiness Officer:
1st Sgt Paul Finn
(717) 255-8080 x 2
paul.f.finn@usmc.mil

PWST Officer:
Major William "Bill" Cook
(717) 255-8080 x 7
william.f.cook@usdoj.gov

Key Volunteer Coordinator:
Rachel Clark
(540) 720-5939
EchoVC@hotmail.com

Key Volunteers:
Gathy Andreacchio
Debbie Baker
Kelley Hassenplug
Carrel Heim
Liz Himes
Wendy Hines
Barb Humbert
Bernadette Lorio
Jeanne Maughan
Chris Morgan
Ashley Rodgers
Barb Schappell
Denise Wenrich
Jayne Wivell

COMPANY COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

Your Marines and Sailors are heavily engaged in the toughest training that the Marine Corps . . . or any other Service has to offer! We are operating out of a small base camp aboard Twentynine Palms called Camp Wilson and living in somewhat Spartan conditions – but the men of Echo Company continue to thrive on the challenge. I have said before that these are the finest men I've ever served with and I am still awe struck at how the company continues to exceed the high standards we have set for ourselves.

From 1 to 28 August we are conducting the "Mojave Viper" final rehearsal exercise that will prepare us, as a rifle company, for even the most challenging missions we will face in Iraq. The first half of the month is focused on combined arms training in which we refine our ability to coordinate platoon and company attacks with supporting arms (such as machine guns, mortars, artillery, tanks, attack helicopters and jet aircraft). The second half of the month focuses on operating in an urban environment and engaging the local population with interpreters and the language skills we have developed. The Marine Corps even provides Iraqi role players for us to work with during this phase. Rest assured that your Marines and Sailors are receiving the finest training possible in preparation for the deployment.

We will not have another block leave period or time to visit family and friends prior to departing for Iraq; however, we should have a few days after Mojave Viper for your Marines and Sailors to make calls home and rest up before we leave California. Stay strong for your Marines and Sailors and know that they are the finest men this Nation can produce.

KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

Saying goodbye to my husband after block leave was one of the hardest things I have ever done. However, it is comforting to know that the next time I see him he will be able to stay home! We now have less than eight months left in the deployment. Our Marines and Sailors need us to stay strong and be supportive now more than ever. They are going to have limited time to call home so be ready when they call. I keep a note pad by the phone with the things I want to talk to Charlie about. I may only have five minutes to talk to him and I don't want to forget anything, especially his requests for my next care package!

Your Key Volunteer (KV) is your life line throughout the deployment. If they call and leave you a message, please call them back. If they send you an email, please write back and let them know that you got it. It is our job to make sure you get official information in a timely fashion and we can't do that if we don't hear from you. Please also let your KV know if you are going on vacation so we know how to contact you. See you at the "Packing Party" on September 6th!

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FRO / PWST COMMENTS

During the past few weeks we have received some outstanding "official" command messages from Major Clark focusing on Echo Company's progress. These messages are vital to the success of the Key Volunteer Network. These messages are the families most reliable way of knowing the: who, what, where, when and how of the Company. Rachel Clark continues to set the example of how a KVN should function. Again as the deployment moves forward and questions and concerns arise please continue to utilize your chain of communication. Remember if you didn't hear it from us it's not official.

RESOURCES

Your primary resource is the Key Volunteer Network (KVN). The KVN is made up of the Commanding Officer (CO), the Family Readiness Officer (FRO), the Asst FRO, the PWST staff, the Key Volunteer Coordinator (KVC) and the Key Volunteers (KV). Every Marine / Sailor with Echo Company has a Key Volunteer assigned to their chosen "point of contact." The KVs will be responsible for contacting the families with official information from the Company and Battalion staffs. The KVs will also be available to help with any issues or concerns you have while your Marine is deployed. Your KV should be your first line of communication with the company. If you have not heard from your KV please contact:

Rachel Clark at 540-720-5939 or ECHOKVC@hotmail.com

Featured Resource: **2/25 Battalion Phone Number** **1-866-580-4699**

The official 2/25 Battalion phone number has messages from the Battalion leadership. Messages are updated regularly so put this number on your speed dial and check it often!

Military Homefront

www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil

This is the official DoD website for the reliable quality of life information to help service families.

Zero to Three

www.zerotothree.org/military/main.html

This website contains many resources including coping strategies for families during a deployment.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Operation Care Package

The first care package was mailed to the Marines and Sailors of Echo Company at the end of July. We are now busy getting everything together for our first ever "Echo Company Packing Party." Be sure to join us on September 6th for a great time! If you are interested in volunteering for Operation Care Package you do not need to live in the Harrisburg area. We are also planning packing parties in Ohio and in the New England area and we need your help! Please contact Debbie Kalman at (717) 574.9839 or djkalman@comcast.net

Operation Home Front

Operation Home Front is putting together an "Echo Company Cook Book" in time for the holidays. Please take a moment to jot down your Marine or Sailor's favorite appetizer, dish or dessert and email your name, your Marine or Sailor's name, your phone number and the recipe(s) to: Sky Armstrong at Sky@getcourage.com. If you are interested in volunteering for Operation Home Front or to make donations please contact Sky Armstrong at (717) 725-7549 or Sky@getcourage.com

Operation Care Package Invites You To: THE ECHO COMPANY PACKING PARTY!

When: Saturday, September 6th, 2008
10:00 am until 4:00 pm

Where: The Echo Company Drill Center
2991 N 2nd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

All Echo Company families and friends are invited to join together for a day of fun, fellowship and packing! Operation Care Package will provide all of the packing materials as well as everything that will go in the care packages. All you need to bring is your Marine or Sailor's favorite food or dessert to share with the other families. Please bring a note card with the: recipe, your name, your Marine or Sailor's name and your phone number so that we can put it in the upcoming "Echo Company Cookbook". Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided. This will be an excellent opportunity for you to get to know other Echo Company family members as well as send something special to our Marines and Sailors.

Please RSVP to Keri Overcast at (610) 349-7711 or sailavee@hotmail.com with your name, your Marine or Sailor's name, your phone number and how many will be in your party.

Just For The Kids

My First Day of School

Fill in the blanks and send the letter to your Marine or Sailor so he can find out all about your first day of school!

Dear _____,

I had my first day of _____ grade today!

It was _____.

My teacher's name is _____.

For lunch I had: _____.

My favorite part was when _____.

My least favorite part was _____.

I can't wait for _____.

I also want you to know _____

Love,



2nd BN, 25th MAR., Golf Company.

Key Volunteer News Letter

August 2008

Hello All,

I hope that everyone enjoyed the time home with "their" Marine during the last week of July. Although it is always hard to say goodbye, never mind for the second time in three months, I trust that everyone made the most of their time together.

I write you while we are attending our final exercise here at Twentynine Palms, a thirty day mission rehearsal called Mohave Viper. Mohave Viper is an intense exercise that will test all the skills that we have been training to for the past year, to include everything we have done in the last three months.

The Company's performance has far exceeded my expectations. Each and every Marine and Sailor has performed in exemplary manner and I could not be more proud of the effort they have put forward and the progress we have made, as a unit, in the last three months.

We have lost our email capability, while at Mohave Viper, and most cell phone carriers have no service on this part of the base so please have patience if you do not hear from your Marine frequently for the remainder of the month of August. The Marines will be able to re-establish communication on a regular basis at the conclusion of Mohave Viper.

I thank you all for the support you give to the Marines and Sailors of Golf Company.

Semper Fi,

Major Fitzsimmons

To all

I just want to say hi to all the family members and key volunteers from G Company. I just checked in on 30 June and took over as the Family Readiness Officer for G Company. I have met with Eileen the KVC in person and had several conversations with her since. I am looking forward to meeting all the key volunteers in August.

I would like to give you all a little background on myself. I just moved here from Twentynine Palms CA. I am married and have 4 children of my own. I myself just returned from deployment in May of 08 and still trying to get settled in here at Picatinny.

As you all know the Marines have just returned back to Twentynine Palms from their block leave. I hope everyone enjoyed the little time they had while they were home. I know it is hard now due to the lack of communication with your Marine. I can speak from experience that communication at Camp Wilson has always been limited especially cell phone coverage.

We are putting together a family workshop in September for all spouses and family members. We are still working on the exact time and date. I hope everyone will be able to attend. I am looking forward to meeting with all the spouses and family members.

Semper Fi,

1stSgt MacCheyne

August 2008

H&S Company Family Newsletter

GREETINGS FROM 29 PALMS, CALIFORNIA

From the Commanding Officer of H&S Company

Friends and Family of H&S 2/25,

Since our last Newsletter, your Marines have continued their hard work, preparing for our deployment to Iraq. (Yes, in spite of troop reductions and events elsewhere in the world, we are still going to Iraq.) As you may know, the mission of Headquarters and Service Company is to provide Combat Service Support and the means to affect Command and Control of the Battalion. Collectively, our skill sets include Infantry, Administration, Intelligence, Scout Snipers, Operations, Training, Logistics, Food Service, Armory, Medical, Motor Transportation, Supply and Communications. We are the ones that enable the Battalion to operate!

Yesterday, I had an opportunity to review the training we have conducted since we left New York. It is impressive to say the least. From firing every weapon system in our inventory to conducting convoy operations, your Marines and Sailors have continued to improve their proficiency in the skills that Marines Units are known for. All while providing 24/7 support to the remaining Companies within the Battalion.

Immediately following our leave period, we left the "comforts" of Mainside, 29 Palms and moved to Camp Wilson, where the living conditions are a little less hospitable. But in true H&S fashion, your Marines and Sailors have dealt with the transition superbly. While the AC, TV, internet and phone service are all missed, the Marines and Sailors have continued to provide outstanding support to the Battalion as we execute a very tight training schedule.

Although we are unable to communicate with you as easily as we did during our first few months, know that you are all in our thoughts and we appreciate the support you provide from home. I cannot stress how well your Marines and Sailors have performed.

It is my honor and privilege to be the Commanding Officer of this Company. I could not ask for a finer group of men.

Major Todd Peppe
Commanding Officer



Marine Parents

a Place to Connect & Share™



CLICK---<http://www.marineparents.com/> Parents Information

THE FOLLOWING MARINES HAVE BEEN PROMOTED TO THEIR CURRENT RANK.

LCpl Wint, LCpl Song and LCpl Beharry were promoted August 1st.
Sgt Zelaya was meritorious promoted August 2nd after being selected from the 4th Marine Division board.

ADDRESS FOR MARINES AND SAILORS. KEEP THE MAIL FLOWING, WE LOVE IT!!!

Tell your family, friends and their friends to write and show our young Warriors, what their efforts mean.

RANK/FULL NAME

H&S Company, 2/25, (Platoon)
Box 700988
Twenty Nine Palms, CA 92278

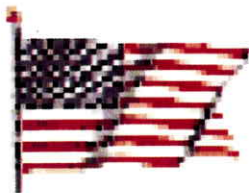
WEBSITES WORTH LOOKING AT.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/al-asad.htm> Al-Asad Website
<http://www.mfr.usmc.mil/hq/mccs/> For information on MARFORRES Key Volunteer Network
www.tricare.osd.mil 1-800 tri-west Information on Tricare)
<http://www.redcross.org/> American Red Cross
<http://www.dfas.mil/> Defense Finance Center/My Pay

Congratulations to the following Warriors for the additions to their families

Cpl Goldsonbarnes
SSgt Jhagroo
Sgt McQuade
LCpl Ortiz
LCpl MacDonald
HN Minion

WHAT WE DO IN LIFE...ECHOES IN ETERNITY



MARINE CORPS

Wives Website

CLICK---<http://www.marinewives.com/> Marine Wives Info

H & S



The Company First Sergeant

As I write this note to all of you, our loved ones and supporters back home, we are coming up on another month complete. Time is moving by and your Marines and Sailors of Team Warriors continue to shock and awe everything in their path. The positive energy continues to grow and they are dug in deep and showing the world what one monster company can achieve through teamwork and unity.

We are currently half way through our final exercise, Mojave Viper. The area that we live in, Camp Wilson is rough living to say the least but I continue to be amazed; yet not surprised at the energy levels and the positive mental attitudes that radiate from this company given the hardships. We have received nothing but accolades and thanks from the Marines we support and this continues to motivate us each day, knowing that our fellow Marines are depending on us to get the job done. Their work ethic and their performance is as fine as any I have ever seen. So, it is with great pride that I report Team Warriors continuing to charge as they "make it happen" in only the way that they can.

The mail is flowing; I urge the surge of continued mail and motivation to our Warriors. I watch their faces light up when they receive it and it is truly a highlight and something that we all live for, because it serves as our constant reminder of our loved ones and how special they are to us. Please continue boldly on **Operation Mail Call** and keep the great stuff coming. We sincerely appreciate all of your support and know without a doubt, that the Marines and Sailors are making it happen and getting it done. We are all so proud of them and as always; we thank you for your continued and unwavering love and devotion.

Sincerely and Always Faithful.

Clark J. Rhiel

First Sergeant of United States Marines.

GOD BLESS OUR MARINES AND SAILORS





2nd BN, 25th MAR., Weapons Company

Key Volunteer News Letter

August 2008

To The Weapons Company Family,

I wanted to invite all of you, as well as friends and neighbors, to help us in a holiday project that will include all of Weapons Co.! Mr. and Mrs. Rice, parents of Capt Rice, and our Key Volunteer, Kerry Benson, Mom to LCpl Joseph Benson, are spear heading an effort to make Christmas stockings (all will be handmade by Mrs. Rice) and fill the stockings for all of our Marines & Sailors! We are looking for volunteers to collect donations in their communities. Then we will need assistance to put the final packages together and ship it all to Iraq. If you would like to help in any or all aspects of this project, please contact Kerry Benson at kjjjp@aol.com or 631-656-5448. We need your help to make our Marines feel a little closer to home this holiday season!

I hope you are all enjoying your summer. I am looking forward to the end of August when our Marines/Sailors will be back from the field and finished with their training exercises so we can communicate more frequently with them. At least for a little while!

Sincerely,

Michelle Johnstone
Key Volunteer Coordinator